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LETTER DATED 3 FEBRUARY 2000 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MALI TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of the Bamako Declaration on the acceleration of the integration process in West Africa, adopted by the ministerial meeting of the Economic Community of West African States and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (ECOWAS-UEMOA) held in Bamako on 28 and 29 January 2000 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex distributed as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Moctar OUANÉ
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

[Original: French]

Bamako Declaration of 29 January 2000 on the acceleration of the integration process in West Africa, adopted by the ministerial meeting of the Economic Community of West African States and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (ECOWAS-UEMOA) held on 28 and 29 January 2000

1. We, the Minsters for Foreign Affairs, Finance, Integration and Trade and the Governors of the Central Banks of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA), meeting in Bamako, Mali, on 28 and 29 January 2000 at the invitation of Alpha Oumar Konaré, President of Mali and current Chairman of ECOWAS and UEMOA, affirm our determination to accelerate the integration process in West Africa and to strengthen our ties of solidarity and cooperation in accordance with the decision taken by the twenty-second Conference of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS, held in Lomé, Togo, on 9 and 10 December 1999.

2. Basing ourselves on the programme set forth in the speech delivered by Alpha Oumar Konaré, President of Mali and current Chairman of ECOWAS and UEMOA, at the opening ceremony, which we have adopted as a working document, we reaffirm our desire to implement the strategy of accelerating the integration process in West Africa.

3. We welcome the initiative of Ghana and Nigeria for accelerating the implementation of ECOWAS integration programmes, notably by creating a second monetary area and a free trade area.

ECOWAS: an area of law, democracy, peace and security

4. Reiterating our attachment to the strengthening of democracy, the rule of law and the consolidation of peace, security and stability in the subregion, we reaffirm that ECOWAS must be an area where the protection of citizens and the defence of human rights are fundamental values.

5. Aware of our peoples' profound aspiration for peace and security, we reaffirm our determination to implement the mechanism of conflict prevention, management and settlement, peacekeeping and security.

6. Determined to put into practice the vision of our Heads of State, we hereby decide to give consideration to the drafting of an agenda that will pave the way for creating a West African federation with a view to achieving African union, in accordance with the Declaration of Heads of State and Government adopted in Sidrah, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, on 9 September 1999.

7. In our concern to guarantee the proper functioning of ECOWAS, the only integration organization in West Africa, we undertake to put in place all its institutions, such as the Parliament, the Court of Justice and the Economic and Social Council.

For the popularization and attainment of the ideals of integration

8. Only by making our populations responsible can our political vision be democratized and our progress towards rapid integration consolidated. We are therefore resolved to work to raise public awareness and to mobilize and involve all members of society in the task of achieving African integration. To this end, the holding of a forum of civil society will be an important stage in the process of inculcating the ideal of integration.

For the acceleration of economic and monetary integration

9. The creation of the ECOWAS single monetary area in 2004 remains a primary objective. To this end, we endorse the initiative of creating a second monetary area within the ECOWAS area and call upon those countries which wish to join it to do so.

10. With a view to establishing a common market, we call upon all the member States to implement without delay the ECOWAS trade liberalization plan.

11. We call upon the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS and the President of the UEMOA Commission to do their utmost to conclude the ongoing consultations on harmonizing their trade liberalization instruments. We call upon the two institutions to report on their performance of this task by the end of May 2000 at the latest.

12. We reiterate our desire to involve the private sector, which must be the driving force of our economic development, more closely in the integration process.

For economic development and efforts to combat poverty

13. In our concern to take up the challenge of promoting the development of our States in the new context of economic globalization and its consequences for the growth of poverty, we undertake in solidarity to do our best to tap and develop the subregion's enormous potential rationally, by means of sustainable development programmes based, inter alia, on regional economic integration, the mobilization of national savings, the promotion of grass-roots initiative and efforts to combat poverty.

ECOWAS: an area without borders

14. Wishing to help strengthen the longstanding ties between our peoples, we express clearly our desire to make ECOWAS an area of freedom. We therefore call upon all those member States which have not yet done so to ratify and implement as soon as possible the conventions and protocols on the free movement of persons and goods and the right of residence and establishment. We recommend that an ECOWAS passport be put into circulation with a view to formalizing West African citizenship.

Cultural and social dimension

15. Taking the cultural dimension of integration into consideration calls for bold initiatives in the area of the harmonization of education programmes, the creation of schools and regional training institutes, the development of research, the promotion of our cultures and the creation of an African academy of languages.

16. In the same order of ideas, the promotion of regional sporting events will help to create a dynamic that can carry the ideals of ECOWAS and strengthen the West African identity.

17. Taking into consideration the transnational dimension of the fight against acquired immunodeficiency syndrome and malaria, we intend to elaborate and implement appropriate regional strategies to halt the spread of these diseases.

18. We are adopting a programme of action and we undertake to implement it with a view to accelerating the integration process in West Africa.